

Serving the Urban Poor

Setting up pro-poor units to improve service delivery

Lessons from water utilities in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia

This field note discusses proactive measures that utilities can take to serve the urban poor, particularly through the establishment of dedicated pro-poor departments or units. Water service delivery to poor people living in Africa's large cities requires this special approach due to unclear land tenure, unplanned layout, overcrowding and lack of accurate data, among other challenges. Although water utility services should be at the center of water and sanitation delivery, many utilities do not yet have the mandate, organizational structure, incentives, or skills to adequately address these challenges.



Summary

The field note discusses how to reorient water and sanitation utilities to meet the needs of poor people in large urban settlements. It outlines the extent of the challenge in sub-Saharan Africa where enormous backlogs in service provision are building up as urban populations continue to grow at an average of 5 per cent annually (Kessides 2005).

The approach taken here is that water and sanitation utilities, whether public or privately owned, should be the primary drivers of service provision to all segments of the population. However, given the fact that well over half of Africa's urban residents are poor and without access to affordable water and sanitation services, utilities will need to adapt their approach and structure in order to viably supply services to a significantly greater percentage of poor urban residents.

Service delivery to the poor in Africa's large cities requires a special approach due to the challenges presented by unclear land tenure, unplanned layout, overcrowding, lack of accurate data, a historic lack of political will to serve the poor and large distances to trunk infrastructure.

The complexity of these challenges coupled with the magnitude of investment required and long-term maintenance needs means that utilities should be at the center of



A Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company kiosk

water and sanitation expansion and cannot rely on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the private sector to serve the poor. However, many utilities do not have the mandate, organizational structure, incentives or skills to adequately address these challenges.

The field note discusses proactive measures that utilities can take to achieve the necessary widespread impact, in particular setting up dedicated pro-poor departments or units within water utility structures.

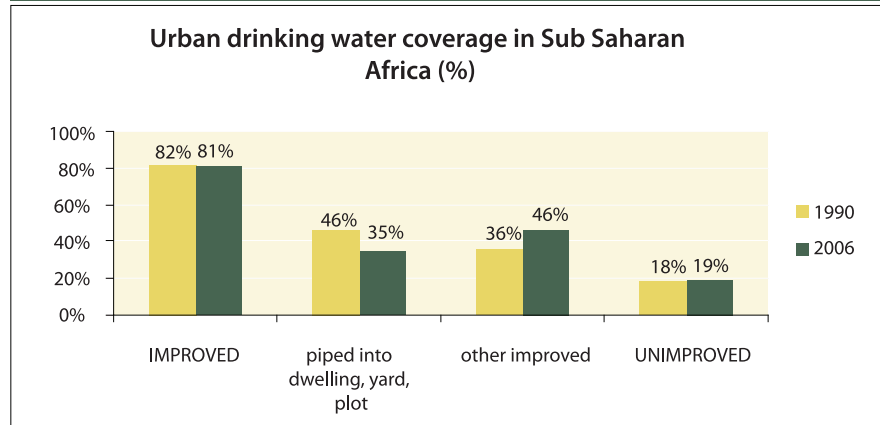
The context

In sub-Saharan Africa most public and privately owned water and sanitation utilities in urban areas struggle to serve their poor consumers. And since poor urban residents make up 72 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's urban population (UN Habitat 2003) the challenge is acute. Clearly, an approach that meets the service needs of this huge and overlooked group of consumers is urgently needed.

In 2006 only 35 per cent of urban residents in the region had a household water connection (see Figure 1). The sanitation situation (see Figure 2) is of even greater concern, with the number of urban residents using an unimproved source of sanitation or defecating in the open having increased from 59.6 million in 1990 to 76.6 million in 2006. With an average urban population growth rate of 5 per cent per year for Africa as a whole (Kessides 2005), the demand for both water and sanitation services is growing steadily.

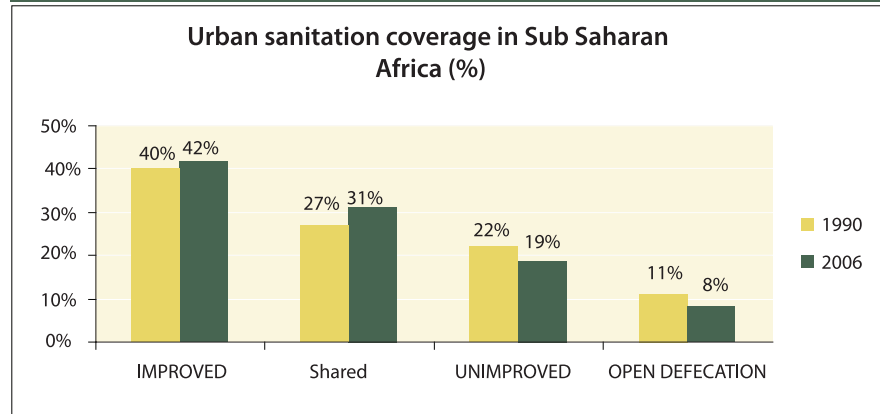
Available statistics (WHO and UNICEF 2006) suggest that the number of unserved people in sub-Saharan Africa – rural and urban – will grow by a further 47 million for water and 91 million for sanitation between 2004 and 2015. The majority of the new, urban customers will be poor households living in inner city slums or peri-urban settlements. Achieving the MDG targets will require specific reforms and actions to prevent infrastructure from falling

Figure 1. Water coverage



Source: Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP)

Figure 2. Sanitation coverage



Source: Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP)

into disrepair due to insufficient cost recovery and inadequate allowances for maintenance. Cost recovery and also innovative finance mechanisms for new capital investments is especially important with the current international financial crisis, which makes funding levels for the sector uncertain.

'Business as usual' not working

Any expansion of water and sanitation in the region faces enormous challenges, since few utilities currently have the mandate, organizational structure, incentives, and skills to address the challenges of serving

the poor. To develop a vision and deal with underlying problems that impede delivery, utilities need stronger political will and greater capacity, and they should not have to rely on non-governmental organizations or the private sector to serve poor communities.

As it stands, the approach to serving the poor by most governments and utilities is dysfunctional on both the supply and the demand side.

On the *supply side*, managers of utilities are discouraged by the fact that the limited resources they expend on serving the poor make little impact. Schemes for poor communities tend to be economically unsustainable, communities are inadequately involved and long-term planning for expansion and maintenance is not generally factored into budgets and plans. Typically this situation is the result of a haphazard or project-by-project approach to serving low-income consumers, as opposed to a mainstreamed, core-business approach.

On the *demand side*, the urban poor are frustrated that utilities tend not to see them as viable customers and do not provide services in a systematic manner. Because the majority of poor people reside far from utility networks, they generally resort to purchasing water in small quantities at exorbitant prices, or connecting to the network illegally (Gulyani et al. 2005).

Non-governmental organizations may provide communities with a borehole, water kiosk or public toilet, but this

is invariably done on a piecemeal basis and without a link to the utility. In addition, the NGO commitment is usually time-limited.

Community managers of kiosks and public toilets have limited technical, management and financial skills and may experience problems with social cohesion, or interference by interest groups, including local leaders or cartels (Dagdeviren & Robertson 2009). A link with the utility is crucial for both long-term maintenance and ensuring that the poor benefit from the utility's economies of scale.

The demography of urban development

While the growth rate for the Africa region has been averaging almost 5 per cent annually over the past two decades, the 'take-off' point for growth in the urban population is yet to come.

The continent is approaching a demographic inflection point, with the number of new urban residents projected to rise sharply by over 300 million between 2000 and 2030.

Already Africa's population is one third urbanized, which is higher than South Asia's 28 per cent.

Source: Kessides 2005

If governments and utilities continue to conduct their operations in the traditional manner, services for poor people in the numbers that are required are unlikely to materialize. In the first place, most utilities do not have a government mandate to serve the poor or to deal with on-site sanitation. Secondly, many utilities have neither the right skills nor sufficient incentive to serve the poor.

By and large utility staff members are trained in a traditional (largely top-down) planning paradigm and are unaccustomed or unwilling to broker complex neighborhood agreements or lead community discussions (Connors et al. 2006). Utilities might not understand their poor consumers or have the expertise to provide them with an appropriate range of services such as public toilets, public taps, shared yard taps, private connections, or sewerage systems suited to private homes in low-income areas. The pricing structures required to serve a more inclusive range of market segments may not be sufficiently researched or understood in relation to connection fees and consumption tariffs.

Shift in perspective essential

Even if all utility managers, political planners, funding organizations and poor citizens agreed immediately that services should reach a much greater proportion of urban residents, the backlogs would continue to grow. Clearly a shift in perspective is needed, in particular a reconsideration of the social and financial models currently being used.

The starting point should be acceptance of the reality that the poor represent a huge untapped market in most African cities. They pay more for water than their richer counterparts because they procure water informally through intermediaries (Plummer 2002; WSP 2004). Practical experience and analysis shows that serving the poor *effectively* not only addresses major public health issues but also makes good business sense for the utility. Taken together, these two outcomes would be of considerable advantage to the utility at a political level.

Clearly utilities (and governments) need to formulate a strategy aimed specifically at extending services to poor citizens. Such a strategy needs to take into account the fact that individually, poor people may be small consumers but collectively they constitute a major market segment.

Implementing a pro-poor strategy

Utilities should take the leading role in providing urban services because they are the only entity with the necessary resources and infrastructure to accomplish the large-scale impact that is now required. Non-governmental organizations and the local private sector also have a role to play in improving services to the poor and can be useful 'in helping users to understand the technical and financial issues that affect their services, and to build, diffuse, and maintain that knowledge' (Muller et

al. 2008). Utilities should consider incorporating a *pro-poor* unit into their structure and corporate strategy. The purpose of such a unit would be to improve coordination between and amongst external partners and lead the effort to:

- Increase access and coverage
- Increase utility revenue
- Reduce water losses
- Improve relations with poor consumers

Structure and role of a pro-poor unit

The idea of such a unit is to ensure that the utility proactively improves services to the poor, rather than responding on an ad hoc basis. Ideally, a pro-poor unit should be structured in a way that allows it to lobby for action and coordinate pro-poor activities across a number of departments. These would include the departments responsible for planning, commercial services, technical matters, human resources and communications.

There is no standard blueprint for a pro-poor unit. Some common features for an effective unit would be (i) management support, (ii) a clear mandate and incentives, (iii) adequate financial resources, and (iv) the appropriate mix of skills to be able to deliver services effectively. To achieve extensive and lasting results, incentives should be established for all utility staff – not only those within the unit – to serve the poor. A pro-poor unit could have the capacity for day-to-day operations, as is the case

already in the pro-poor units operating in the Zambian capital Lusaka, and Kampala in Uganda.

The appointment of dedicated, full-time staff to the unit will allow the utility to focus attention on current poor service users as well as the unserved and work with other departments to come up with innovative solutions. The utility should ensure that the pro-poor unit does not work in isolation or become a 'ghetto' that is not taken seriously by the other departments (Muller et al. 2008; Connors 2006). The actual design or 'home' for such a unit will depend on the utility's structure, its operational challenges and the size of the service area.

Centralized or decentralized structures

The advantages of centralizing or decentralizing the unit – or creating a hybrid of the two – will vary from utility to utility and may change over time. In Uganda's National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) the pro-poor unit has a field office where customers can pay bills, apply for a new connection, or report problems. The pro-poor field office supports the other traditional field offices throughout the city, and is supported by staff members at the corporation's Kampala headquarters, who drive the pro-poor investment programs.

In Zambia's Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company (LWSC), the manager of the pro-poor unit is based at the company headquarters, and

13 other full-time staff members are based in peri-urban field offices. In Kenya's Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC), the entire staff complement of the pro-poor unit is based at headquarters, although the company is now considering placing community development assistants in the field offices because customer interface is so fundamental to serving the poor.

Focus of unit

A pro-poor unit needs to decide on its area of focus. Should it concentrate on corporate planning and capital works, operations and maintenance – or both? Some units lay the pipes or issue kiosk contracts themselves, while others are mainly in a liaison role, working across a utility to engage engineering staff for network extensions to low-income areas, for example.

The pro-poor branch of Uganda's NWSC is responsible for day-to-day customer services. It also works closely with development partners and has a mandate to pilot new initiatives, such as prepaid meters. In Tanzania, the community liaison unit of the Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA) implements construction projects in coordination with NGO partners and provides guidance to community-managed schemes. While DAWASA is the asset holding company mandated to develop and manage assets, it has also taken on more of an operations role for peri-urban, off-network schemes.

Table 1. Range of possible tasks (all specific to serving the poor)

• Preparing investment plans
• Designing infrastructure/preparing projects
• Laying pipes
• Connecting customers
• Coordinating with development partners
• Coordinating with public institutions
• Liaising with other utility departments
• Sensitizing and training utility staff
• Interfacing with water tanker operators
• Interfacing with exhauster operators
• Designing special initiatives (e.g. social connections, lifeline tariff, pre-paid meters)
• Preparing budgets
• Community consultations
• Physical mapping
• Socioeconomic mapping
• Monitoring progress
• Preparing strategies and guidelines
• Issuing contracts for private operators
• Training communities on operations and maintenance (O & M) of shared facilities
• Resolving customer complaints

Articulating a shared vision

A dedicated pro-poor unit should have a mission statement and a vision that it communicates to internal and external partners. As an example, the vision statement of Uganda's National Water and Sewerage Corporation pro-poor unit is:

To be a model in delivery of sustainable water and sanitation

services in the urban poor settlements in the world through provision of innovative solutions with emphasis on partnerships and community involvement in order to improve the living condition of the urban poor.

The key words defining this vision are 'innovation', 'partnerships' and 'community involvement'. While these



Filling up jerrycans of water in Nairobi slums

concepts cannot themselves result in productive action, the vision is a conceptual starting point from which to set more concrete milestones and targets.

Setting targets

The adoption of pro-poor performance targets helps to ensure that utilities deliver on their social and financial mandates. The Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company's FY10 performance contract with the Government of Kenya (through the asset holding company) will include specific targets for informal

settlements, where 60 per cent of the city's population resides. Senegal's privately owned operator - Sénégalaise des Eaux (SDE) - has targets in its lease contract for the volumetric amount of water distributed to consumers. As a result of setting these specified targets, as well as overall performance improvements and subsidized connections, 98 per cent of Senegal's urban population has access to safe water (World Bank 2008).

What can other countries learn from Senegal's coverage to poor people? A key factor in Senegal's success has been the existence of lease contracts

between government and utilities, which specify the level and extent of services to poor communities. These pave the way for utilities to adjust their own corporate objectives. Komives (1999) recommends that policymakers 'weigh how contracts and regulation are likely to affect private concessionaires' ability, obligations, and financial incentives to serve low-income households.' Targets should be clear and not subject to 'reinterpretation' by the operator (Dagdeviren & Robertson 2009).

In addition to the overall targets, individual utility employees could have their own clearly defined, pro-poor

Table 2. Examples of pro-poor performance indicators

Water	Sanitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of new connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private • Shared yard tap • Public kiosk/standpipe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of new connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private connection • Shared sewerage connection • Public toilet (sewer) • Public toilet (septic tank)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Percentage of metered connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private • Shared yard tap • Public kiosk/standpipe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collection rate (actual income/total billed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private • Shared yard tap • Public kiosk/standpipe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hours of supply per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Percentage of water quality samples in compliance

targets. To make this happen, a utility will need a performance management system that includes employee and departmental performance targets, along with systematic evaluations. The utility should encode its accounts in such a way that progress in serving poor customers can be monitored. The Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company completed such a 'coding' exercise in 2009. The ability to differentiate customers residing in informal settlements from others means it can now set realistic targets for serving informal settlements with indicators that can be monitored and evaluated.

Indicators and targets should focus on outputs rather than inputs, for example serving customers well rather than just connecting them and meeting minimum obligations (Connors & Brocklehurst 2006). The

quantitative targets set for each indicator will depend on factors such as historical performance and the level of investment. Targets will also depend on special initiatives, such as subsidized connections, which may affect the number of expected new connections.

When measuring the extent to which targets have been achieved, the indicators should be segregated for (i) the entire service area, (ii) non-poor areas, and (iii) poor areas.

The indicators given in Table 2 are likely to encourage utility staff to:

- Increase access to water and sanitation in low-income areas.
- Improve the management of standposts.
- Reduce the number of illegal connections.

- Coordinate with external partners.

The examples provided (see Table 2) are not exhaustive and do not replace traditional targets like *production capacity per capita* or the *percentage of non-revenue water*. However, the incorporation of some or all of the recommended targets across the utility will help ensure that the pro-poor unit does not rely solely on the goodwill of its staff (Connors & Brocklehurst 2006).

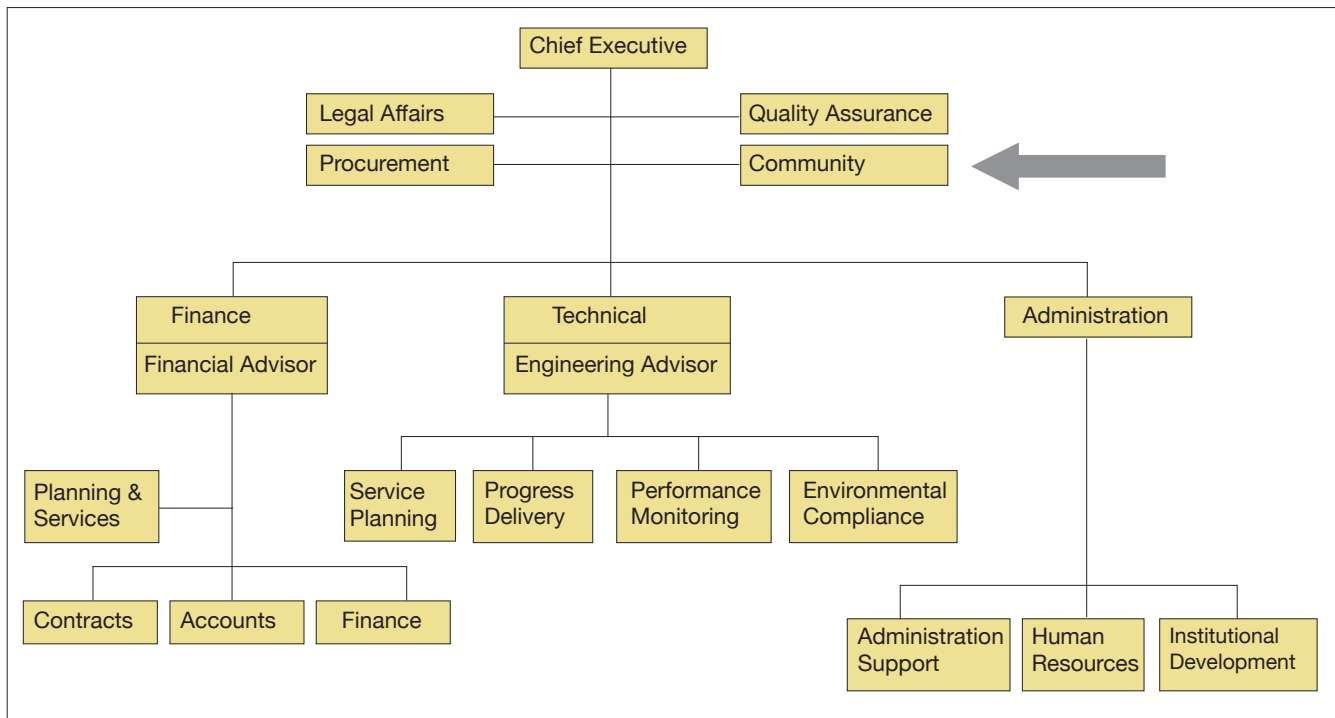
Creating a supportive environment

The pro-poor unit will need strong support from the utility senior management and the board of directors. The utility should adopt a corporate strategy that specifically includes services to poor communities and assigns a high-ranking status to the unit. The head of the unit is more likely to be effective if he or she is a *senior* manager reporting directly to the utility head or other senior director.

The Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company has recently adopted guidelines for serving the poor in collaboration with its asset-holding company, the Athi Water Services Board¹. The guidelines were developed in consultation with NCWSC staff members, NGOs, and the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program (WSP).

¹ The Nairobi guidelines are available online at http://www.wsp.org/UserFiles/file/Af_Nairobi_Strategic_Guidelines.pdf

Figure 3. Organization of the Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority



In the Nairobi utility the head of the pro-poor unit reports to the NCWSC technical director. In the Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority, the head of the equivalent unit (in this case the Community Liaison Unit), reports directly to the chief executive officer (see Figure 3). The prominent positioning of both these units is important, because it indicates to staff and partners that providing services to poor constituencies is an integral part of the utility. It also means that utilities can attract managers for their pro-poor units who are well qualified and able to take their place alongside other senior managers in decision-making forums.

Pro-poor units' impact will be greater if governments hold utilities accountable to serving the poor, while also supporting the eradication of free standpipes, illegal connections and unregulated groundwater abstraction. Utilities generally need political support to extend services to poor settlements, among other reasons, because they invariably have to contend with complicated land-ownership issues.

Committing resources

A pro-poor unit needs dedicated human and financial resources so that it can carry out its mandate

without depending solely on project and donor funds. Its budget should be incorporated into the utility's overall budgeting process. Senior management will have to make decisions such as whether the unit's activities should be cross-subsidized through internal revenues, and whether the unit will have an annual budget.

There may be a need to consider increasing staff numbers in other departments if improving services to the poor results in significantly increased workloads in these departments. Whatever the approach adopted for allocating financial and human resources to a pro-poor unit,

it should be explicitly defined, and periodically evaluated.

Some utilities may start out with a fully-fledged pro-poor unit while others might start small with a vision to expand. In general pro-poor units will need core funds for staff salaries, training, office space, vehicles and other equipment.

Unit managers or team leaders should have the necessary qualifications to occupy a senior management post. While a university degree is preferable, more important is familiarity with the local water and sanitation sector, a good understanding of poor community dynamics, strong leadership and communication skills and the ability to deliver results. The rest of the team should ideally include one or more engineers, plumbers, sociologists, and community development officers. Frontline staff may need training in

listening and responding effectively to users' concerns (Baietti et al. 2006). Other useful skills for the unit include mapping, marketing, and public relations but these may drawn from the utility's other departments.

Informal settlements units require staff with the following skill set and experiences:

- **Participatory assessments**
- **Participatory planning and design**
- **Identifying and mobilizing key stakeholders**
- **Liaising with small scale providers**
- **Using appropriate technologies**

In general, utility staff are accustomed to dealing with customers as individuals, but the political and economic dynamics of low-income areas will require them to address community issues.

The Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority's pro-poor unit holds regular meetings with community groups to discuss challenges and help resolve issues.

Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company's pro-poor unit frequently holds community meetings in informal settlements to explain the water reforms to customers, promote water conservation and payment, and consult with communities on their priorities for improvements.

New pro-poor units may have to consider hiring staff from outside the utility if the required skills are not available among existing staff.



Queuing for water in Zambia

Table 3. Summary of pro-poor unit examples

Country	Kenya	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia
Utility	Nairobi City Water & Sewerage Company	Dar es Salaam Water & Sewerage Authority	National Water & Sewerage Corporation, Kampala Branch	Lusaka Water & Sewerage Company
Name	Informal Settlements Department	Community Liaison Unit (CLU)	Urban Pro-Poor Branch	Peri-urban Department
Date established	2008	2003	2006	1999
Population in poor settlements	Approximately 1.9 million (60% of Nairobi's population)	Approximately 900,000 (36% of the total population) ²	Approximately 450,000 (20% of the total population)	Approximately 1.5 million (60% of the total population)
Number of full-time staff of unit	6 (<i>expansion plans are underway</i>)	5	10	14
Staff composition of unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manager - Technicians (2) - Lead Sociologist (1) - Assistant Sociologist (1) - Secretary (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manager - Communications Specialist (1) - Engineers (2) - Technician (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manager - Technical Supervisor (1) - Plumbers (1) - Commercial Staff (1) - Social Workers (4) - Cashier (1) - IT support (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manager - Zone Heads (3) - Senior Engineer (1) - Engineer (1) - Superintendents (2) - Asst Community Development Officers (4) - Customer Services Assistants (3) - Foreman (1) - Community-based, Contract Plumbers (41)
Model used	Headquarters Department	Headquarters Department	Branch Office	Headquarters and Branch Office

²Government of Tanzania's 2002-2003 Household Budget Survey

(Continuation) Table 3. Summary of pro-poor unit examples

Country	Kenya	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia
Utility	Nairobi City Water & Sewerage Company	Dar es Salaam Water & Sewerage Authority	National Water & Sewerage Corporation, Kampala Branch	Lusaka Water & Sewerage Company
Purpose	To coordinate donor and partner initiatives; implement capital work programs (<i>in coordination with the asset holder</i>); and provide guidance and support to branch offices for O & M and social issues.	To implement and supervise the community-managed water and sanitation schemes; also responsible for DAWASA public relations and implementing the resettlement action plan (RAP).	To execute NWSC's mandate to help meet the Millennium Development Goals by providing support to NWSC branches in the city of Kampala with informal settlements; and to work with HQ and donors to implement capital works programs targeting the urban poor.	Coordination, implementation and operations of services in peri-urban and informal settlements.
Provided with annual budget	<i>Starting in FY09-10</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reporting	The Department Head reports to the Technical Director (who then reports to the Managing Director).	The CLU manager reports to the CEO.	The Branch Manager reports to the General Manager of Kampala and the Project Manager of Urban Poor Projects (located at headquarters).	The Peri-urban Manager reports to the Commercial Director (who then reports to the Managing Director).
Novel approaches	Strong focus on community participation and partnerships.	Off-network schemes in peri-urban areas.	Pre-paid meters.	Semi-autonomous branch in informal settlements, partnerships with Community Water Trusts.



Polluted river passing through Nairobi slum

Lessons from existing pro-poor units

The pro-poor units in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia demonstrate that a utility's approach to serving the poor cannot be static. Good practices evolve through a learning process that evaluates changes in the environment, identifies successes and failures, and institutionalizes lessons (Townsend & Gebhardt 2007).

The Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company's pro-poor unit was created mainly as a liaison unit based at headquarters. However, the utility has found that in the branch offices the utility staff is reluctant to serve the poor for a variety of reasons. With the support of the utility's managing director, the unit is launching a campaign to redefine its role in relation to the branch offices and for the branch offices to incorporate pro-poor targets. The company uses a participatory approach;

encouraging regional staff to express the challenges they face and propose solutions.

In Uganda, Kampala's pro-poor branch office has been able to increase its revenue collection twenty-fold since its creation in 2006. It attributes this to a close relationship with customers. The pro-poor branch office connects approximately 50 new customers a month. However, before replicating the model in other cities, the corporation is evaluating whether this branch model (versus a

headquarters department for example) is the most effective method to achieve its goal of improved services for the city's poor.

Despite having the mandate and dedicated human resources, the Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company's peri-urban unit is struggling to gain priority within the company's operations. Due to government pressure the unit has had to rethink its initial mandate, which was to focus on poor people served directly by LWSC (not by community trusts or NGOs). The company has reached an agreement with the Ministry of Local Government and Lusaka City Council that all donors, NGOs, and other stakeholders interested in undertaking water or

sanitation projects within LWSC's area of jurisdiction must do so through the company. This will avoid duplication of projects and also takes into account LWSC's area of responsibility. The company is currently working with the regulator on specific issues involving independent providers, such as tariff and water quality regulation and maintenance responsibilities.

Many of Dar es Salaam's community-managed schemes for delivering water have fallen into disrepair or are poorly managed, so the asset holding company (Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority) is now promoting a business-like approach to managing water and sanitation schemes. This involves hiring a project manager for each of the schemes and the

clustering of smaller schemes to achieve economies of scale. While DAWASA has known that the link with the private operator (Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Company) is crucial for day-to-day service delivery to the poor, the operator has been hesitant to commit significantly to delivering services in off-grid areas, where many of the poor live. However, DAWASA has recently made some progress in getting the operator to mainstream pro-poor approaches, through the creation of a social connection fund financed through a tax levy. Discussions are also underway for the operator to establish its own pro-poor unit, which would work closely with the asset-holding company's pro-poor unit.



Toilet structures in Mukuru slum, Nairobi

Conclusion

Traditionally water and sanitation utilities in Africa have not devoted much attention to serving poor people despite demographic trends indicating that the growth rate of urban dwellers is increasing, and the fact that poor people can and already do pay for services. It is clear that African governments and the utilities providing water and sanitation services need to pay more attention to serving their poor citizens.

The four examples presented of pro-poor units in eastern and southern Africa operate in complicated social, political and economic environments. Nonetheless, they are clear examples of utilities committing resources and actively working with partners to improve services to the poor. These utilities are moving beyond the purely technical towards a more coordinated, city-wide approach.

Setting up a dedicated pro-poor unit is not an end in itself, it is a tool to help utilities plan and implement improved services to the poor on both a strategic and programmatic basis. Utilities and their pro-poor units should be frequently evaluated to ensure progress towards the end goal - access to more affordable and reliable water and sanitation services for the poor



Manual sludge exhausters in Mukuru slum (Nairobi)

Serving the Urban Poor

This series of field notes on Serving the Urban Poor aims to provide lessons to public sector decision-makers, managers and implementers, and their private partners, to tackle the challenges of service delivery to the urban poor. The series is concerned with the key issues and actions necessary to improve the scale and rate of progress towards the MDGs in urban areas: making utility reform work for the poor; enhancing the role of local private providers; promoting incentive driven, predictable enabling environments; and strengthening consumer voice and mechanisms to improve the accountability of service providers.

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WSP MISSION

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